

MOTION 5: Railton, Amidei, Barald, 9-16-20

Resolved:

(1) That the members of the Faculty Senate call upon the University administration, and specifically upon President Mark S. Schlissel and Provost Susan M. Collins, to release details about the models and assumptions that have guided University planning for the current “in-residence Fall Term”, including the justification for the testing protocols adopted, the evidentiary “circuit-breakers” that would cause the administration to discontinue current plans, and the arrangements the University will make to reduce the risk of spreading infection beyond the University community in such an eventuality or at the projected end of term.

(2) That accurate information about day-to-day levels and trends in testing, results, and the location and magnitude of outbreaks be provided through the UM COVID-19 Dashboard.

Background:

More than 1,400 members of the University community endorsed a letter sent to the University of Michigan Regents and Executive Officers on July 27, 2020. That letter called for a “full and transparent disclosure” of:

- (1) The UM plan for screening, tracing, and isolation.
- (2) A critical analysis of this plan that shows it will keep the community safe.
- (3) The degree of resilience of the plan to the failure of critical assumptions.
- (4) The contingency plans for what will be done if an outbreak exceeds control.

As of today (September 2, 2020), the University has furnished considerable information regarding (1), and we understand that the University has plans for random surveillance testing of asymptomatic students, faculty, and staff, and has recently announced the intention to increase testing capacity from 3,000 per week to a more appropriate 3,000 per day (*University Record*, September 1, 2020). We welcome these plans, though we note with concern that the random testing registration and regime are still not in place, even though we are now in the first week of classes, and that the results of current testing are being presented on the UM COVID-19 Dashboard in a manner insufficiently detailed to allow prompt community identification of, and response to, possible outbreaks. (Other institutions have found that, by specifying a minimum outbreak size, e.g., >5 cases, it is possible to protect individual privacy while reporting more detailed information.)

Moreover, the information the University has furnished since the original letter of inquiry still does not provide clear responses to requests (2)-(4). The University has not disclosed the model, models, or assumptions it is using to guide analysis or policy, or how resilient the model or models would be if these assumptions failed. And it has not indicated what it considers a reasonable level of risk, or of incidence or rate of infection, to permit continuation of on-campus housing and in-person instruction. Crucially, we have not seen University plans to limit infection spread if on-campus housing and in-person instruction are curtailed and students are urged to return home, or for the projected end of term in November. Will students be tested before they leave, and provided quarantine if need be? How will students living off-campus be included? Are adequate testing and quarantining capacity being prepared to accomplish this?

The University might not currently have fully worked-out answers to these questions. That is part of the point of this motion: Answers are needed urgently, and they should have the benefit of open, informed discussion within the University as well as with the surrounding communities. This is not possible without greater transparency.

Motion submitted by:

Peter Railton, Arthur F. Thurnau Professor, Gregory S. Kavka Distinguished Professor of
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Supported: Dante Amidei, Associate Chair and Professor, Physics, LSA

Supported: Kate Barald, Professor Emerita (Active), Cell and Developmental Biology and
Biomedical Engineering, Medical School

Results: Yes, 1,635; No, 118 Motion PASSED

Link to News Item:

[https://facultysenate.umich.edu/faculty-senate-
and-clinical-faculty-ballots-the-results-are-in/](https://facultysenate.umich.edu/faculty-senate-and-clinical-faculty-ballots-the-results-are-in/)